TORONTO

FLAT BLACK

ISSUE 02

KWEST

KASM

SKAM

BONS

ART CHILD

BACON

DEZIO

REKON & SEWNR

MOTEL & SWYFT

SEVER & RIME

VIRUS

TECK
HONE
TENSR
KSMET
MORIC
WIRE
DSNC
RECKA
2011
SUIKO
KENE
MARE
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NESK
TORONTO
2
OKINAWA

EKWAL & CAFIE

WYSPER

SIGHT

ABMNGT !!!

POSER

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979-0700
URBAN NERDS
DYING BREED

CREWS

EAST

SOHOE

MOZIE

DSNC

TINY

ENUE

REN

HONE

SIZEO

CHUCK & SUEME

ANSR & SLICER

ANSR

KAINT

OSKER

SMUG

REKON
NEOGLOBALTECHNOLOGY

WIRE

EMPYR

DONE

TRED

SOHOE & JAROE

HUNGR

HERBS

BATH & BACON

FEATURED WRITER TECK

For those of us who don't know, tell us a bit about who you are, where you're from, and what you stand by?

I guess one way to describe myself is to say I work a blue-collar job and live a pretty basic life during the week. I pay taxes and earn an honest living. Like most guys I have a past time, but mine isn't watching sports or attempting photography or something. My past time is graffiti art. I've been painting graffiti since I was 12 yrs old and I am still as active as ever.

I grew up in an industrial neighborhood right beside a busy freight and go line so I saw lots of nice graffiti passing through on the trains back in the day. I had a pretty tough childhood and I also had all the freedom I wanted after my mom died in 92. I guess that recipe is what created a graffiti artist out of me, it was a perfect fit for me. It's not like I really chose it, I just started tagging around town and became addicted. It wasn't long before I was working on style and striving to do better every time I painted.

Well your effort has payed off and made you one of the more influential writers in Toronto, would you say you're satisfied with your style or is there still room for improvement?

There is always room for improvement and change. I am happy that I am still doing the same style all these years and didn't get trendy and bite euro shit or west coast style, but I feel I should have put a lot more effort into my work and made it more entertaining with backgrounds and new concepts etc. My photo collection isn't that exciting to look at.

How would you describe graffiti in Toronto when you first started writing?

When I first started writing I didn't see much graffiti other than some magic marker tags in my neighborhood. There was one guy who wrote Toze and I was sure he lived near me and I was fascinated by his tags. He was up at every bus

stop and subway station bench and payphone in town! He had a cool tag with a face on it. No one knew who this person was and it just kept showing up everywhere in the neighborhood. It was a mystery, and that's how it should be.
As I got a bit older, like 14 or so, I began exploring the city more and started seeing a lot of nice work by the TCM crew. I remember seeing those Sec faces all over the place and Ren had the best hand styles back then. I noticed tags by Cyber, Jeep, Dum Muk, Spydr, Seek, Snic, Mase, and also the DUK crew from the north end of the city. Maybe I am just stuck on the past but I feel like the styles were better back then. They were less developed and less trendy so it was nice to see small humble tags that were different from each other. Nowadays graffiti seems to be about destruction and it looks shitty to me most of the time. And it's all copied.

What are some of the major changes you've noticed in graffiti in the last 15 years, have they been for better or for worse?

#1 - Internet
We're living in a cyber world today. I think that destroyed, and helped make convenient just about everything in life. The true essence of graffiti has been spoiled with forums, graffiti movies, Ironlak cans with featured artists graffiti on the fucking cans, and graffiti spraycan belts that hold cans for you! Fuck that shit.. I would have never started writing if I had all these conveniences and fun accessories to choose from at the click of a mouse. I prefer to see the old Krylon logo over any of these euro brands marketing crap.. And when caps were hard to get, I appreciated them more and tried to salvage them or its another stock tip piece! Social networking like forums and graffiti based websites really fucked up the future of graffiti in my opinion because any geeky toy from 905 can now gain a following just because he's all over the net with some shit talk and flicks of ugly bombs he did.
However! These tools are used by serious people too, and although it's a tiny percentage, I think it has done a lot of good things for the culture as well.

#2 - Paint
When it comes to paint, needless to say the quality is much better than 15-20 years ago. It is easier to paint now and that makes it easier to do a lot more detail. I'm a pretty negative old fashioned type of person but I can't say many bad things about the paint these days! It's great..

#3 - Image
In the past 15 years I have seen a change in style. Not only the style in letters but I can now explain to you how someone looks physically just by looking at his graffiti, and that's without ever seeing the person in my life. These metro sexual hipsters are all over the fucking place and they all do the same shitty care free style. I've been patiently waiting for this fad to pass but it's a slow process. I'm taking it one day at a time.

#4 - Street Bombing
And then we got the Manrs and Spuds! lol.. I was optimistic when I came back to Toronto from Vancouver a few years ago and noticed some writers were putting in a lot of work. I was like "ok, they got balls, now all they need is to work on style". I personally like most bombers, but I think it is a little bit fucked up to just go out and destroy peoples property for no reason other than to get attention from graffiti writers. What ever happened to the art side of graffiti? Hipsters and Vandals took over.
Fame should be based on quality not quantity.

You've been to known to paint with many people, including a lot of prolific writers. Can you talk a bit about the people who've made an impression on you?

I've painted with lots of different people in my life and I'd have to say one experience that stands out was with Stem from YNN crew while I was visiting New York City in 2004 with Hemps. We painted a rooftop lineup of about 6 guys, all of them were older than me by like 15 years except for Hemps. Stem painted beside me and was all business not much talk and he was a fast painter. He did 2 pieces in about 3 hours. One was for a friend of his who just died, I can't remember the name I think it said Wiot but he also did a Stem and the style was superb. He added a character to the memorial and burned me to a crisp. I had a chance to check out his blackbook before he left and I was amazed at what I saw, very neat, small burners organized as if he cut and pasted them or

something. Hard to explain but Stem is a king. Painting with Ren is always an experience to remember. He has been painting as long as I have been alive and his style is my biggest influence. I remember meeting Causr in some sketch areas in the middle of the night to do some shit back in the day, we couldn't be more different personally, but we'd be out there all night painting trains or rooftops till the sun came up. It was really fun back then.

Where would you find yourself on a Saturday night, what keeps you busy when your not working or writing?

The area I live in now is far from the action so I usually just hang around here or stay at home. I sometimes get the urge to go downtown and get hammered but I work everyday pretty much so that's becoming pretty rare.

Would you say graffiti has been a positive influence in your life, do you ever wish you chose a different hobby?

I think about that question a lot. I will never make money from art so I guess I should have concentrated more in class or sports or something. I love the art but I think it took over me and held me down from being more productive. I met some great people from doing graff but I think it was a terrible choice of hobby, no money in it, and lots of bullshit.

Can you give us some insight into what it was like trying to get ill back in the day, what sort of things motivated you to be better, what were the trends in style?

I don't really know what motivated me, I just enjoyed being creative and it became addictive. I don't know what trends there were, it's nothing like today where everything is copied from some person on the other side of the planet. Toronto had a style of it's own, it was either Scarborough influenced or West side influenced. Then people started biting LA and then Euro stuff now its everything you can find online is in the streets.

For everyone who wants to know, whats your stance on what's happening in Toronto right now with Mayor Ford?

He has a job to do and he's just doing what he thinks is in the best interest of the city. I disagree with his approach to the problem, it seems ignorant to just go out and buff anything done with a spraycan but that won't last long. He seems like an asshole sometimes but I don't pay much attention to Toronto politics, too boring for me. I did notice etobicoke got buffed more than anywhere else. That is where he lives and probably the least graff in the city. That pissed me off.

Any other advice, stories, or ideas you can share with our readers?

The only advice is have respect for the private property owners, I believe what goes around comes around so think twice before hitting some neighbors garage or some mom and pop shop's window. Destruction is a cry for attention and that doesn't get respect.

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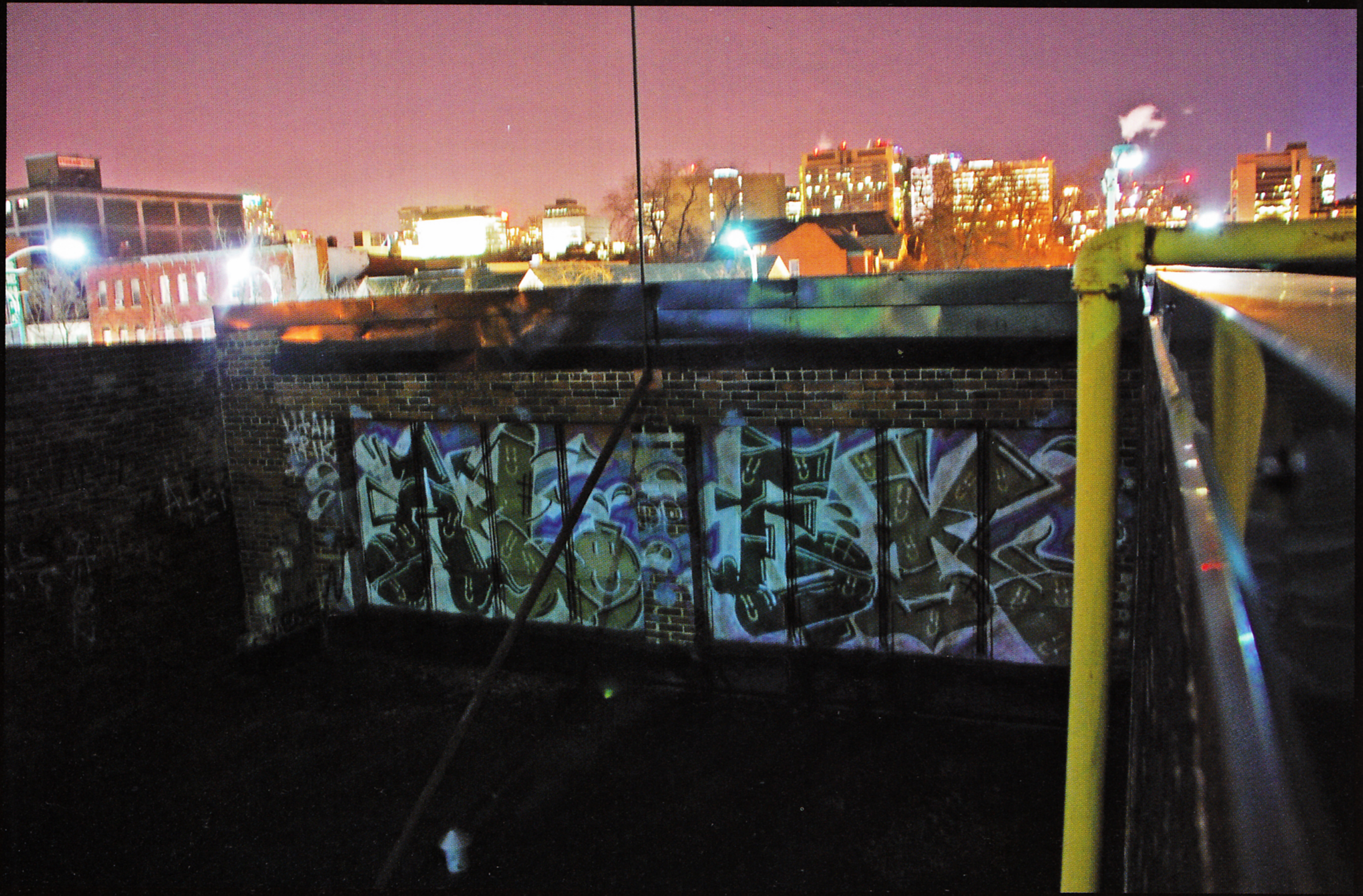

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